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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health and Safety Hazards Associated With Fire Clean Up

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department has issued the following personal protection precautions while cleaning your property:

- ♦ Wear protective glasses or goggles to protect your eyes.
- ♦ Use a two-strap dust particulate mask with a nose clip. A mask rated N-95 or P-100 will be more effective than simpler dust or surgical masks in blocking particles from ash. If you do not have a mask, use a damp cloth to cover your nose and mouth.
- ♦ Wear long sleeved shirt and long pants to protect your skin.
- ♦ Wear leather gloves to protect hands from sharp objects while removing debris.
- ♦ Wear rubber gloves when working with outhouse remnants, plumbing fixtures, sewer piping and chemicals.
- ♦ Wear boots with thick (lug) soles. Avoid tennis/running shoes, whose soles can melt or be punctured.



The California Environmental Protection Agency has these recommendations regarding cleaning up ash:

Fire ash may be irritating to the skin, especially to those with sensitive skin. If the ash is breathed, it can be irritating to the nose and throat and may cause coughing. Exposure to ash in air might trigger asthmatic attacks in people who already have asthma. Therefore, in order to avoid possible health problems the following is recommended:

- ♦ Don't allow children to play in the ash. Wash off toys before children play with them.
- ♦ Clean ash off house pets.
- ♦ If you have a vegetable garden or fruit trees, wash fruit or vegetables thoroughly before eating them.
- ♦ Avoid getting ash into the air as much as possible. Do not use leaf blowers or take other actions that will push ash into the air. Shop vacuums and other common vacuum cleaners do not filter out small particles, but rather blow particles out the exhaust into the air where they can be breathed. The use of shop vacuums and other non-HEPA filter vacuums is not recommended. HEPA filter vacuums could be used, if available.
- ♦ Persons with heart or lung disease should consult their physician before using a mask during post-fire clean up.

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